

August 29, 2019

Home Clean-Up After the Storm



Contact: Environmental Health 321-633-2100 or 321-615-8035

Viera, FL — The Florida Department of Health in Brevard County (DOH – Brevard)

After a storm has passed, failure to remove contaminated materials from your home can be a health risk. If there is flooding, water must be removed as quickly as possible since it may be contaminated from overflowing sewage systems.

If flood water containing sewage has gotten into the house, the following measures should be taken to ensure proper clean-up:

- Wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during clean-up.
- Do not mix bleach with ammonia cleaners or acids because a dangerous gas will be formed.
- Walls, hard-surfaced floors and many other household surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with a solution of 1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon of water.
- Remove and discard contaminated household materials that cannot be disinfected, such as wall-coverings, cloth and rugs.
- Drywall and insulation that have been saturated should be removed and thrown out so disinfection and drying of the internal wall structure can take place.
- Items that cannot be washed or dry-cleaned, such as mattresses and upholstered furniture, may possibly be air dried in the sun and sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant. However, these items may need to be thrown out.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water or have them dry-cleaned.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect food contact surfaces and children's play areas.
- Steam clean all carpeting. The carpet and padding may not be salvageable.
- Fiberboard, fibrous insulation, and disposable filters in your heating and air conditioning system should be replaced.
- Once cleanup is complete, it is important to completely dry out affected items to prevent the growth of mold.

It can be difficult to throw away items in a home, particularly those with sentimental value. However, keeping certain items soaked by sewage or floodwaters may be unhealthy. In general, materials that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours should be discarded.

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The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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